

## CLAIMS

The invention is claimed as follows:

- 5           1.     A gaming device comprising:  
          a game operable upon a wager by a player;  
          a plurality of reels in said game;  
          a plurality of symbols on said reels, said symbols including at least two  
wild symbols including one of the wild symbols on each of two of said reels;  
10           a triggering event associated with the generation of one or more  
designated symbols on the reels; and  
          a processor operable after said triggering event to:  
          (a) cause a generation of a plurality of the symbols on the reels without  
an additional wager by the player,  
15           (b) provide the player any award associated with any winning  
combinations of generated symbols on said reels from said generation,  
          (c) repeat (a) and (b) until one of said wild symbols is generated on one  
of said reels in said generation, and  
          (d) if one of said wild symbols is generated on one of said reels in said  
20           generation, locking the position of the reel with said wild symbol for a  
designated number of further generations of symbols on a designated number  
of other reels, wherein  
          (i) if a designated number of other wild symbols are generated on  
said reels in said designated number of further generations, unlocking the  
25           position of the reels with said wild symbol and returning to (a), and  
          (ii) if a designated number of other wild symbols are not  
generated on said reels in said designated number of further generations,  
terminating any further generations of said reels until another wager is made in  
the game.  
30           2.     The gaming device of Claim 1, wherein each reel includes at  
least one wild symbol.

3. The gaming device of Claim 1, wherein a plurality of different reels include a plurality of wild symbols.

4. The gaming device of Claim 1, which includes a probability of generating at least one of the wild symbols on the reels associated with each of the wild symbols, wherein the probability of generating each of said wild symbols is equal.

5. The gaming device of Claim 1, wherein the designated number of further generations is predetermined.

6. The gaming device of Claim 1, wherein the designated number of further generations is randomly determined.

7. The gaming device of Claim 1, wherein the designated number of further generations is based on the amount of the wager by the player.

8. The gaming device of Claim 1, wherein the processor is operable to provide the player any award associated with any winning combinations of generated symbols on said reels from each said further generation.

9. The gaming device of Claim 1, wherein if one of said wild symbols is generated on one of said reels in one of said further generations and the designated number of wild symbols has not be reached, said reel is locked, and the remaining designated number of further generations of symbols occurs on a at least one of the reels with at least one wild symbol.

10. The gaming device of Claim 1, wherein each reel that generates one of said wild symbols is locked for said subsequent further generations of symbols until the designated number of other wild symbols are generated on said reels or said designated number of other wild symbols are not generated on said reels in said designated number of further generations.

11. The gaming device of Claim 1, wherein the designated number of other wild symbols is at least two other wild symbols generated on said reels in said designated number of further generations.

5 12. The gaming device of Claim 1, wherein the designated number of other reels is less than total number of said plurality of reels.

13. The gaming device of Claim 1, wherein the designated number of other reels is at least two other of said plurality of reels.

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14. The gaming device of Claim 1, which is controlled through a through a data network.

15 15. The gaming device method of Claim 14, wherein the data network is an internet.

16. A gaming device comprising:  
a game operable upon a wager by a player;  
a plurality of reels in said game;  
a plurality of symbols on said reels, said symbols including at least two  
5 designated symbols including one of the designated symbols on each of two of  
said reels;  
a triggering event associated with the generation of one or more  
designated symbols on the reels; and  
a processor operable upon said triggering event to:  
10 (a) cause a generation of a plurality of the symbols on the reels without  
an additional wager by the player,  
(b) provide the player any award associated with any winning  
combinations of generated symbols on said reels from said generation, and  
(c) repeat (a) and (b) until one of said designated symbols is generated  
15 on one of said reels in said generation,  
(d) if one of said designated symbols is generated on one of said reels  
in said generation, locking the position of the reel with said designated symbol  
for a designated number of further generations of symbols on a designated  
number of other reels, wherein  
20 (i) if a designated number of other designated symbols are  
generated on said reels in said designated number of further generations,  
unlocking the position of the reels with said designated symbol and returning to  
(a), and  
(ii) if a designated number of other wild symbols are not  
25 generated on said reels in said designated number of further generations,  
terminating any further generations of said reels until another wager is made in  
the game.

17. The gaming device of Claim 16, wherein each reel includes at  
30 least one designated symbol.

18. The gaming device of Claim 16, wherein a plurality of different reels include a plurality of designate symbols.

5 19. The gaming device of Claim 16, which includes a probability of generating at least one of the designated symbols on the reels associated with each of the designated symbols, wherein the probability of generating each of said designated symbols is equal.

10 20. The gaming device of Claim 16, wherein the designated number of further generations is predetermined.

21. The gaming device of Claim 16, wherein the designated number of further generations is randomly determined.

15 22. The gaming device of Claim 16, wherein the designated number of further generations is based on the wager by the player.

20 23. The gaming device of Claim 16, wherein the processor is operable to provide the player any award associated with any winning combinations of generated symbols on said reels from each said further generation.

25 24. The gaming device of Claim 16, wherein if one of said designated symbols is generated on one of said reels in one of said further generations and the designated number of wild symbols has not been reached, said reel is locked, and the remaining designated number of further generations of symbols occurs on at least one of the reels with at least one designated symbol.

25. The gaming device of Claim 16, wherein each reel that generates one of said designated symbols is locked for said subsequent further generations of symbols until the designated number of other designated symbols are generated on said reels or said designated number of other  
5 designated symbols are not generated on said reels in said designated number of further generations.

26. The gaming device of Claim 16, wherein the designated number of other designated symbols is at least two other designated symbols  
10 generated on said reels in said designated number of further generations.

27. The gaming device of Claim 16, wherein the designated number of other reels is less than total number of said plurality of reels.

15 28. The gaming device of Claim 16, wherein the designated number of other reels is at least two other of said plurality of reels.

29. The gaming device of Claim 16, which is controlled through a through a data network.  
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30. The gaming device of Claim 29, wherein the data network is an internet.

31. A gaming device comprising:  
a game operable upon a wager by a player;  
a plurality of reels in said game;  
a plurality of symbols on said reels, said symbols including at least two  
5 designated symbols including one of the designated symbols on each of two of  
said reels;  
a triggering event associated with the generation of one or more  
designated symbols on the reels; and  
a processor operable upon said triggering event to:  
10 (a) cause a generation of a plurality of the symbols on the reels without  
an additional wager by the player,  
(b) provide the player any award associated with any winning  
combinations of generated symbols on said reels from said generation,  
(c) repeat (a) and (b) until one of said designated symbols is generated  
15 on one of said reels in said generation, and  
(d) if one of said designated symbols is generated on one of said reels  
in said generation, locking the position of the reel with said designated symbol  
for a designated number of further generations of symbols on a designated  
number of other reels, wherein  
20 (i) if a designated number of other designated symbols are  
generated on said reels in said designated number of further generations,  
unlocking the position of the reels with said designated symbol and returning to  
(a),  
(ii) if a designated number of other wild symbols are not  
25 generated on said reels in said designated number of further generations,  
terminating any further generations of said reels until another wager is made in  
the game,  
(iii) wherein each reel that generates one of said designated  
symbols is locked for any subsequent further generations of symbols until the  
30 designated number of other designated symbols are generated on said reels  
or said designated number of other designated symbols are not generated on  
said reels in said designated number of further generations, and

(iv) the player is provided any award associated with any winning combinations of generated symbols on said reels from each said further generation.

5           32.    The gaming device of Claim 31, wherein the designated number of other reels is less than total number of said plurality of reels.

          33.    The gaming device of Claim 31, which is controlled through a through a data network.

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          34.    The gaming device of Claim 33, wherein the data network is an internet.

          35.    A gaming device comprising:  
15           a game operable upon a wager by a player;  
          a plurality of reels in said game;  
          a plurality of symbols on said reels;  
          a triggering event triggered by the generation of one or more designated symbols on the reels, wherein after said triggering event:

20           (a) a generation of a plurality of the symbols occurs on the reels without an additional wager by the player,

          (b) the player is provided any award associated with any winning combinations of generated symbols on said reels from said generation,

25           (c) steps (a) and (b) are repeated until a designated symbol or symbol combination occurs on the reels;

          (d) if the designated symbol or symbol combination occurs, a subsequent event occurs, wherein the result of said event is either a terminating event or a non-terminating event both of which are based on the number of designated symbols generated in said event; and

30           (e) if the non-terminating event occurs, beginning step (a) again.

36. The gaming device of Claim 35, which is controlled through a through a data network.

37. The gaming device of Claim 36, wherein the data network is an  
5 internet.

38. A gaming device comprising:  
a primary game operable upon a wager by a player; and  
a triggering event triggered in the primary game, wherein after said  
10 triggering event:

(a) a generation of one or more symbols occurs without an additional  
wager by the player,

(b) the player is provided any award associated with any of the  
generated symbols from said generation,

15 (c) steps (a) and (b) are repeated until a designated symbol or symbol  
combination occurs;

(d) if the designated symbol or symbol combination occurs, a  
subsequent event occurs, wherein the result of said event is either a  
terminating event or a non-terminating event both of which are based on the  
20 number of designated symbols generated in said event; and

(e) if the non-terminating event occurs, causing beginning step (a)  
again.

39. The gaming device of Claim 38, which is controlled through a  
through a data network.

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40. The gaming device of Claim 39, wherein the data network is an  
internet.